



## REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 5 NOVEMBER 2020

### COMMUNITY ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

#### 1 Reason for Report / Summary

- 1.1 This report lays out plans to establish Community Access to Educational Establishments that ensures the needs of communities are met and that access remains within budget by maximising the efficient use of Council premises.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Approve the community access guidelines for the use of educational establishments.**

#### 3. Purpose and Decision-Making Route

- 3.1 This paper is brought to the Communities Committee on 5 November 2020, it was presented to the ECS Committee in October 2020.

#### 4. Discussion

- 4.1 At the meeting of the 21 March 2019 the Education and Children's Services Committee requested a report on access to community users.

- 4.2 Through clear guidelines, Aberdeenshire Council is committed to promoting the use of its facilities to develop links with local communities. All efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of the community in each Cluster, with academies established as the main site for access in each area. The presumption will always be in favour of granting the let request where it does not impact adversely on the operation of the facilities within each Cluster and this will be achieved through network programming.

- 4.3 Aberdeenshire Council is are committed to building strong links with the communities it serves. The Council has a wide range of educational, recreational and sporting facilities which can be used to meet a variety of community needs. Facilities which can be utilised include but are not limited to:

Sport pitches, including Astro pitches; School halls or gymnasiums; Classrooms; Home Economics (HE) classrooms, Computing classrooms and Workshop facilities.

- 4.4 **Appendix 1** details the principles for enabling community access to educational establishments. The access arrangements for the use of educational establishments requires a balanced approach to be taken to meet the needs of community groups requiring access to facilities against the Service requirement to effectively manage costs against a background of diminishing resources. The aim is to meet community needs in a cost-effective way whilst ensuring groups can positively contribute towards key objectives as agreed in the Cultural Strategy and the Sports and Physical Activity Strategy.

- 4.5 Set hours and days will be mirrored across Education and Live Life Aberdeenshire (LLA) facilities. Opening facilities out with traditional opening hours incurs significant

additional costs to the Council. Although the presumption will always be towards finding a solution and arranging a booking, the pricing structure established to allow use of these premises out with traditional opening hours will follow the Corporate Charging Framework. As such the service will charge the end user on the basis of full cost recovery. All bookings, whilst not generating a profit, need to be within budget to the Council. There may be some instances where it is uneconomical to open an establishment and in those instances the request would be refused.

4.6 In seeking to increase community use of Council facilities, Aberdeenshire Council values local knowledge and recognises that there can be no 'one size fits all' solution. These guidelines are intended to be flexible in order to empower officers to identify local solutions for local needs. Officers will have delegated responsibility at a local level and will endeavour to be as flexible as possible to ensure local needs are met. Flexibility could include varying charges, and this will be considered as part of the charging review. For example, where an existing PPP contract is in place for facility management special offers can be introduced to encourage booking of this facility. Dialogue is continuing with ECS Area Officers to look towards further integration with local groups where possible and innovative ways to increase access, for example, local key holders.

4.7 The following fictitious town scenario is a possibility for the future access arrangements:

'Stonehead' is a small rural town that has an academy and 4 primary schools. Other facilities in the town include a family centre, a hall and a library. Local villages contain a variety of primary schools and village halls. All facilities have spaces available for booking on an online system that can be accessed through the Aberdeenshire Council website, linked with the LLA booking area. The site shows clear information including pricing, special offers and discounts, classes available, availability and booking information, with a telephone/email helpline to assist users with queries.

Caretaker support is available to open and monitor sites from the academy and larger primary schools. Head teachers undertake keyholder responsibilities for their own afterschool access without the need for caretakers, and community access is enabled through local keyholders, where this is practical, particularly significant for more remote locations, through procedures set up to ensure security is maintained.

4.8 Charging policy for community lets will be common to both ECS and LLA establishments and will be agreed and combined during the next charging review due to commence in 2020/21. The charging policy will be based around key principles and subsequent guidance, rather than set common pricing lists and will allow for a degree of promotional pricing to encourage new business. Charges will also be reviewed to ensure costs are kept to a minimum for users whilst also remaining cost neutral for the Council. Charges will comply with the Corporate Charging Framework.

4.9 The need for physical distancing to enable groups to resume meeting during the Covid-19 outbreak may have an impact that to date has not needed to be considered. Specific issues include the requirement to expand the number of spaces used to accommodate social distancing, and the economic impact of Covid-19 may mean the Council can't afford to do this on every occasion. There may be a requirement for the cleaning costs to be factored into charging rates to facilitate the use of spaces.

4.10 There is a probable importance of ‘open space’ in the future, which may be supported by School facilities, particularly school playing fields and outdoor learning spaces. It is envisaged that there may be more demand/ pressure to open up with minimal facility support where the use of more outdoor space is promoted to ‘save’ indoor space.

**5. Council Priorities, Implications and Risk**

5.1 Access to such services and activities in the heart of local communities will contribute to the following Council Priorities:

Our People - Education and Health & Wellbeing

5.2 This report helps deliver against Aberdeenshire Children’s Services Plan Priority – Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing

This report helps deliver on the LOIP Priority – Child Poverty

5.3 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations is(are) agreed.

*Where answered “Yes” to Equalities and/or Fairer Scotland Duty, an Equality Impact Assessment must be completed and attached as an appendix. If answered “No” or “N/A” an explanation must be provided.*

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Financial	X		
Staffing	X		
Equalities	X		
Fairer Scotland Duty			X
Town Centre First			X
Sustainability			X
Children and Young People’s Rights and Wellbeing			

5.4 An equality impact assessment has been carried out as part of the development of the proposals set out above. It is included as Appendix 2 and there is a positive impact identified. The equality impact assessment will continue to be reviewed as action plans are further refined.

5.5 The staffing, financial, sustainability and children and young people’s rights and wellbeing implications are:

Financial

Charging will move towards as full cost recovery model with costs to be offset by income received from lets.

Staffing

The staffing model for accessing buildings may change with caretaking hours required to facilitate access.

Children and young people’s rights

Children and young people’s rights are supported by the access of groups to sites.

5.6 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:

- ACORP001 - Budget Pressures. There is a potential for a marginal cost to the Council, which should be offset by the income generated
- ACROP006 – Reputational Risk to the Council by not being able to make all facilities available to the public due to cost constraints.

## **6 Scheme of Governance**

6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments have been included.

6.2 The Committee will be able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section E 6.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance to scrutinise and review the effectiveness of Council policy implementation and Council service delivery in respect of any function within its remit.

**LAURENCE FINDLAY**  
**DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Report prepared by Karen Tucker, Team Manager – Governance and Empowerment  
Date: 18 September 2020

### **List of Appendices**

**Appendix 1: Table of Principles for Community Use of Educational Establishments**

**Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment**

**Appendix 1:**

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>Procedures will be clearly defined to ensure schools are able to book the use of spaces in the facility in which they are based for the academic year ahead for parents' evenings, concerts, information evenings, careers events, etc.</p>	<p>The existing policy whereby there is equal priority for school / community bookings once schools have laid out their annual curricular and extra-curricular needs will remain in place.</p>
<p>The needs of local users will be prioritised to support our communities.</p>	<p>There are a range of groups interested in education facilities, from voluntary local groups, charities, clubs representing Shire wide interest and commercial national organisations. There will be a presumption of priority for Aberdeenshire based groups. Officers will prioritise groups that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver community services locally</li> <li>• Deliver community services regionally, but are recognised to primarily benefit Aberdeenshire residents</li> <li>• Deliver services that assist LLA and Aberdeenshire Schools achieve their objectives.</li> </ul> <p>Officers will also look to attract commercial users – which should be at a commercial price.</p>
<p>Access to booking facilities should be easily accessible for users and information regarding availability should be clear.</p>	<p>Streamlining the booking and administrative support for facilitating access will be reviewed and improved to ensure a 'One Aberdeenshire' approach is taken across the estate for LLA and Educational Establishments. Linked to this will be the marketing and booking system for the community use of educational establishments jointly with LLA for local groups.</p>
<p>In order to address local economic need the charging structure may vary between facilities in different areas of Aberdeenshire. Consistency will be offered across establishments where possible.</p>	<p>The service will publish a charging structure in relation to each facility. Due consideration will also be given to maintenance as well as possible replacement costs in relation to for example grass, synthetic and sand-based playing surfaces. The charging structure will be evaluated annually and reviewed every 3 years. Charges will be applied equitably for hire of facilities in line with policy &amp; information regarding pricing structures shared openly.</p>
<p>We will endeavour to proactively offer users suitable accommodation for their needs.</p>	<p>We will endeavour to meet all user needs by proactively offering suitable alternatives where we are unable to meet an applicants first preference which could either be an alternative time and date, or an equivalent space in an open venue nearby.</p>
<p>The synthetic pitches facilities should be booked in a cost-effective way to ensure minimal cost to the Service,</p>	<p>For example, Midmill School - only the pitch is booked and the school is not opened. Only the caretaker working at the academy is required to lock the facility therefore ensuring</p>

<p>whilst remaining accessible where possible, for community use.</p>	<p>minimal staffing cost and no energy costs as the building is not opened.</p>
<p>Running of the Community Campus facilities that are bookable out with school hours will not be duplicated by both Education and LLA staff.</p>	<p>Where a Community Campus has facilities open and is managed out with school hours by LLA managers and staff there will not be a requirement for a caretaker to remain on site to provide 'lock up' duties. School caretaking staff will complete security duties at the end of the school day and LLA staff will secure the building and set the alarm when community use has finished. Where possible LLA will secure the site at the end of use.</p>
<p>The operation of the access to educational establishments will be a joint approach with Education &amp; LLA</p>	<p>Where possible the LLA / ECS team will jointly oversee the operation of community access to ECS Community Schools. In some circumstances this is not possible, for example, where LLA managers are not in a cluster, or working on a site, in which case access will be managed by the SSC and based on common principles in this document.</p>

Appendix 2

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EIA Version	Date	Author	Changes
1	18.09.2020	K Tucker	
<b>Stage 1: Title and aims of the activity</b>			
Service	Education and Children's Services		
Section	Education		
Title of the activity etc.	Community access to educational establishments		
Aims and desired outcomes of the activity	To balance the use of educational establishments by community users with the needs of the school and the requirement for community use to be cost neutral.		
Author(s) & Title(s)	Karen Tucker, Team Leader – Governance & Empowerment		

**Stage 2: Evidence that has been used in this assessment and what it means in relation to the activity.**

Evidence	What does it say?	What does it mean?
Internal data (customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).	Complaints regarding process have been ongoing from users over a period of time. Inequalities across different areas as to the availability of provision have been recorded by Officers.	Procedures across the Council need to be standardised across educational establishments run by ECS and LLA. Joint working is required to address differing procedures and charges.
Internal consultation with staff and other services affected.	Internal consultation is taking place with Area Managers, LLA Managers, PPP Officers, CSN Support Service Co-ordinators, Supervisory Janitors, ECS SLT, Internal Audit, Finance and Lets Booking Teams.	Officers at all levels have been involved with the development of the proposals and their input has been included in the report.
External consultation (partner organisations, community groups, and councils).	Discussions with community users and councillors have highlighted a need for more robust guidance to ensure provision is provided where possible.	Cleared guidance for booking procedures from the point of the customer making a booking, the site manager being informed, and the fees being charged. Customer satisfaction surveying needs to be included in the process.

External data (census, available statistics).	Data is being collated from other authorities and local providers to gauge the appropriate level of charging.	Local Authority monitoring for Northern Alliance Partners charging. Private Provider monitoring where possible from website data. COVID19 restrictions in place prevent real time update.
Other (general information as appropriate).	N/A	N/A

### Stage 3: Evidence Gaps.

Are there any gaps in the information you currently hold?	Awaiting benchmarking data for cost analysis of charging structures for lets. Consultation process with LLA and user groups to ensure effect service is delivered to community users. Procurement exercise undertaken to ensure a booking system that is cost effective and suitable for booking a variety of facilities and resources is available and affordable for the Council. Covid-19 response has impacted timeline for this work.
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### Stage 4: Measures to fill the evidence gaps.

What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan at the back of this form.	Measures:	Timescale:
	Undertake benchmarking and review data	Oct 20
	Undertake consultation with LLA and user groups	Oct 20
	Undertake review of marketing and IT capabilities to provide robust & cost-effective booking system for users and staff.	In consultation with LLA

### Stage 5: The steps that can be taken to promote good relations between various groups/areas

These should be included in the action plan.	Workshops and consultation with user groups and staff.
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### Stage 6: How the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity

Extending the opportunity for use of Educational Establishments by community users in a cost neutral environment. Ensuring a consistent approach within Aberdeenshire for all community users and groups
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**Stage 7a:**

**Are there potential impacts on protected groups?**

The protected groups covered by the equality duty are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Who is affected by the activity or who is intended to benefit from the proposed activity and how?

Complete the table below for each protected group by inserting “yes” in the applicable box/boxes below.

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Age – Younger	Yes			
Age - Older	Yes			
Disability	Yes			
Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers)	Yes			
Religion or Belief	Yes			
Sex	Yes			
Pregnancy and maternity	Yes			
Sexual orientation – (includes Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual)	Yes			
Gender reassignment – (includes Transgender)	Yes			
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Yes			

**Stage 7b: Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy, activity etc. will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?**

**This is about trying to be fair to everyone. Part of that is realising that not everyone may be starting at the same place. Some individuals and families may have low income, may have very little or no savings which means they are living from month to month therefore changes to council policies/services may have a greater adverse impact on them.**

**On this basis you should consider potential impacts on individuals/families by:**

- **Place: on specific vulnerable areas or communities (SIMD, regeneration, rural) e.g. housing, transport.**
- **Pockets: household resources, (Income, benefits, outgoings) ability to access a service**
- **Prospects: peoples life chances e.g. access to, or ability to access: employment, training, services (such as council or health) or support.**

**Groups of people who may be impacted include, but not limited to:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployed</li> <li>• Single parents and vulnerable families</li> <li>• People on benefits</li> <li>• Those involved in the criminal justice system</li> <li>• People in the most deprived communities</li> <li>• People who live in rural areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pensioners</li> <li>• Looked after children</li> <li>• Carers including young carers</li> <li>• Veterans</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Single adult households</li> <li>• People who have experienced the asylum system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those leaving the care setting including children and young people and those with illness</li> <li>• Homeless people</li> <li>• People with low literacy/numeracy</li> <li>• People with lower educational qualifications</li> <li>• People in low paid work</li> <li>• People with one or more protected characteristic</li> </ul>
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Please complete by inserting "yes" in the applicable box/boxes below.

Socio-economic disadvantage	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Pockets: Low income/income poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	YES			
Pockets: Low and/or no wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	YES			

Pockets: Material deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies	YES			
Place: Area deprivation – where you live, where you work				YES
Prospects: Socioeconomic background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income , educational achievement.	YES			

### Stage 8: The positive and negative impacts

Impacts.	Positive	Negative
Please detail the potential positive and/or negative impacts you have highlighted above. Detail the impacts and describe those affected.	Pockets. A consistent and clear approach to community access to Educational premises enabling wider community group and individual access enhances the opportunities for individuals in and across these categories to more readily access locally directed support services from community groups.	
	Prospects. Enabling local community support groups to have equitable and fair access to Educational premises as a base for providing support to vulnerable groups within a community setting. It creates additional access opportunities for both individuals and groups across the demographic range for training, education or support purposes.	

### Stage 9: Have any of the affected groups/areas been involved, engaged with or consulted?

If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps?	The work at this time is directed at enabling access to Educational Establishments by local community groups with no highlighted negative impacts which would require mitigating steps at this stage
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**Stage 10: Mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce negative impacts**

These should be included in any action plan at the back of this form.	Mitigating Steps	Timescale

**Stage 11: The monitoring arrangements. How the EIA will be used to monitor the proposal**

These should be included in any action plan (for example customer satisfaction questionnaires).	Monthly monitoring of establishment usage will provide management information on the user groups and uses to which the facilities are being let.
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**Stage 12: The outcome of the Assessment**

Please complete the appropriate box/boxes	1	No negative impacts have been identified –please explain.
	Aberdeenshire Council is aiming to continue the opportunity for community groups to access a range of educational, recreational and sporting facilities to meet a variety of local needs. There are no negative impacts which have been identified in continuing to offer this service to our communities and citizens.	
	2	Negative Impacts have been identified, these can be mitigated - please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen.
	3	The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully – please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen

\* Stage 13: Set out the justification that the activity can and should go ahead despite the negative impact.

Not applicable

**Stage 14: Sign off and authorisation.**

Sign off and authorisation.	1) Service and Team	ECS Governance & Empowerment Team	
	2) Title of Policy/Activity	Community Access to Educational Premises	
	3) <b>Authors:</b> I/We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Mike Kennedy Position: Senior Admin Officer Date: 22.06.2020 Signature:	Name: Kathryn Sutton Position: Senior Admin Officer Date: 22.06.2020 Signature:
		Name: Karen Tucker Position: Team Manager – Governance & Empowerment Date: 22.06.2020 Signature:	Name: Position: Date: Signature:
	4) Consultation with Service Manager	Name: Craig Clement Date: 22.06.2020	
	5) Authorisation by Director or Head of Service	Name: Laurence Findlay Position: Director of Education Date: 22.06.2020	Name: Position: Date:
	6) If the EIA relates to a matter that has to go before a Committee, Committee report author sends the Committee Report and this form, and any supporting assessment documents, to the Officers responsible for monitoring and the Committee Officer of the relevant Committee.	Date:	
7) EIA author sends a copy of the finalised form to: equalities@aberdeenshire.gov.uk	Date:		